

FARMER
An Historical Memoir
of Billerica.

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AN
HISTORICAL MEMOIR
OF
BILLERICA,
IN
MASSACHUSETTS.

CONTAINING

NOTICES OF THE PRINCIPAL EVENTS,

IN THE

CIVIL AND ECCLESIASTICAL AFFAIRS

OF THE TOWN,

FROM ITS FIRST SETTLEMENT TO 1816.

BY JOHN FARMER.

Published by Request.

AMHERST, N. H.
PRINTED BY R. BOYLSTON.

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1816.

HISTORICAL MEMOIR.

BILLERICA, in the County of Middlesex, was known to the first European inhabitants by the name of Shawshin, which it probably received from its proximity to the river of this name. To the aboriginal inhabitants, it appears to have been known by the name of Shawshinock,* or Souhegenock, a name applied to the river Shawshin in an ancient plan. Its present name is derived from Billericay, in the county of Essex, in England, from whence it is supposed that several of the first inhabitants emigrated. By them it was written *Billericay* in the earliest records of the town. It is known that some of the first settlers were from Raleigh, a town contiguous to Billericay, in England, and this, with other circumstances, affords a presumption that several were actually from the latter place.†

A concise view of the *legal* origin of the town may be gratifying to the curious enquirer. The means of information on this subject must be derived from copies of original grants, which fortunately have been preserved. Nothing

* I find in the records, "Shawshinock, or Billerica," and in an old plan, "Souhegenock river," which it is thought can be no other than Shawshin river.

† BILLERICA was about the twelfth original town settled in the county of Middlesex. It is ranked among the "noted towns" of New-England, in Herman Molls' Folio Geography, printed in 1701. It is 18 miles north of Boston, and is watered by Concord and Shawshin rivers, which run northeastwardly into Merrimac river. The number of inhabitants at the commencement of the century might have been 870. The limits were then much more extensive than they are at present. It is now surrounded by Chelmsford, Tewksbury, Wilmington, Burlington, Bedford, Carlisle, all of which adjoin it. Anciently, it was bounded by Chelmsford, Andover, Woburn, Cambridge and Concord. From an ancient plan in my possession, apparently taken in conformity to the original grant to Cambridge, the length from Andover line to Concord was about 11 miles; the greatest breadth from Shawshin to the mouth of Concord river, 6½ miles, and the least breadth from Shawshin to Concord river 3½ miles. The town, lying on both sides of Concord river, is at this time seven miles in length, and of various breadth, and contains about 17,000 acres.

satisfactory occurs in history. In 1642, a grant of all the land* between Concord and Shawshin rivers, and extending to Merrimac river, was made by the General Court to the town of Cambridge, upon the condition "that they should erect a village there within five years, which should not extend so as to prejudice the villages of Charlestown and Cochituate." From the nature of this grant, it appears probable that this was the first within these limits, that was made by the General Court with a view of forming a township. The next year, a second grant was made, without the express condition of effecting a settlement as stipulated by the former. Several years passed away, before the inhabitants of Cambridge availed themselves of the privileges conferred by these grants. The last undoubtedly retarded the settlement, as the town of Cambridge was exempted from the condition of forming a settlement within a limited time.

From the best evidence which can be obtained, it is inferred that the first settlement was made about the year 1653. It was commenced by a number of respectable families; some from Cambridge, but the greater part were originally from England. The following information respecting some of the most prominent characters among the early inhabitants is collected from authentic sources. *John Parker*, supposed to have been born in England, was approved as clerk of the writs, in this town, in December, 1657. He was one of the first selectmen, and continued in that office seven years. He died, 14 June, 1667. *John Kitteridge* was an inhabitant as early as about 1659. From him, it is said, have descended all of the name in New-England. Tradition informs us, "that he had knowledge of the healing art." This knowledge seems to have descended to his posterity in the eldest branch of his family. He died, 18 October, 1676, leaving five sons. John Kitteridge, his oldest son, was a physician in this town, and died, 27 April, 1714, at the age of 49. *John Rogers* was among the early inhabitants. He died, 25 January, 1686, leaving four sons. John Rogers, his oldest son, from whom are descended all of the name now in town, was killed by the Indians, in 1695. *William French*, born in England, in 1604, it seems was an inhabitant of Cambridge, but afterwards came to this town. He was a military officer, and frequently solemnized marriages. He died, 20 November, 1681, in his 78th year. *John French*, his son, was an inhabitant in 1659, and died in October, 1712,

* With the reservation of individual grants. See Appendix, article I.

aged about 78. *George Farley*, a resident at Woburn a few years after his emigration to this country, was one of the selectmen seven years. He died, 27 December, 1693. *Ralph Hill*, who died, 29 November, 1663, was an early inhabitant, and one of the selectmen two years. Three of his sons, Ralph, Jonathan and Nathaniel settled in this town at an early period. Ralph Hill, his eldest son, was one of the selectmen eleven years, and a deputy to the General Court in 1693 and 1694. He died, 2 May, 1695. *Samuel Manning* was selectman nine, and town clerk six years. In the years 1695 and 1696, he was elected a deputy to the General Court. He died, 22 February, 1711. *Simon Crosby* was one of the first innholders in town. The time when he first became an inhabitant does not appear. He was admitted a member of the church, 24 November, 1667, and consequently must have been an inhabitant about that time. In several town offices, he appears to have acquitted himself to general satisfaction. He died after the year 1714. *Jonathan Danforth*, brother to the honorable Thomas Danforth,* was a native of Framingham in England. He was distinguished among the first settlers of this town, and had a principal share in all its public transactions. He died, 7 September, 1712, aged 85. Jonathan Danforth, his son, died, 17 January, 1711, aged 53. Reverend *Samuel Whiting* was an inhabitant as early as 1658. He was son of reverend Samuel Whiting of Lynn, who married a daughter of the right honorable Oliver St. John† of England. It is presumed that she was his mother.‡ The time of his birth has not been ascertained. The records of Lynn have been examined for that purpose, but give no information. Considering the time he graduated, it appears probable that he was born in England. Of the last two, a more particular account will be given under the respective years of their death. *Thomas Richardson* was from Woburn. He was accepted as an inhabitant, 26

* Judge Sullivan, in his history of Maine, page 385, says that Thomas Danforth of Cambridge "had two brothers, the one a clergyman of Roxbury," and "the other brother was a minister in Billerica." The worthy author perhaps mistakes with respect to the last. I find no evidence of his being a minister, though it is apparent from his writings that he was a scholar, and might have had an acquaintance with the languages.

† The family of St. John was very ancient, and derived their surname from a place called St. John, in Normandy, a late province of France.

‡ Elisabeth Whiting, wife of reverend Samuel Whiting, of Lynn, died March 3, 1677.

Reverend Samuel Whiting died, December 11, 1679—*Lynn records*. His life may be found in Mathers' *Magnalia*.

August, 1667. He was a deputy to the General Court in 1703 and 1704. He died, 25 February, 1721. *Edward Farmer* was son of John Farmer of Anceley, in the county of Warwickshire, in England, from whence he emigrated to this country.* He had a considerable share in the public affairs of the town. He died, 27 March, 1727, aged about 87. *Joseph Tompson* was a selectman and town-clerk many years, a deacon of the church, an instructor of youth, a captain of the militia company, and a deputy to the General Court in 1699, 1700 and 1701. He died, 13 October, 1732, aged 93, having survived all the original settlers of the town.

The progress of the settlement was not rapid. Being connected to Cambridge, and their local situation unfavorable to frequent intercourse with that place, the inhabitants of Billerica, then Shawshin, early applied for separate privileges. So early as 1654, the inhabitants of Shawshin requested freedom and immunities from all public rates and charges at Cambridge. This request, resulting from the inconvenience of their situation and their local disadvantages with respect to Cambridge, appears to have received immediate attention. It was taken into consideration by the inhabitants of Cambridge, at a public meeting, 29 January, 1654. Four commissioners, Henry Dunster, Richard Champney, Edward Goffe and John Bridge, were appointed to make such propositions to the inhabitants of Shawshin, as they should conceive to be most "meet and equal." The following is the substance of the several propositions, submitted by the commissioners to the people of Shawshin, which were readily accepted.

1. That all the lands, belonging to the place called Shawshin, shall be an entire township, or plantation, freed and acquitted from all manner of common charges, due or of right belonging to Cambridge, by virtue of any grant of that place to them by the General Court.
2. That the inhabitants of Cambridge, or their heirs and assigns, who may improve any lands they may possess in Shawshin, shall pay to the common charges in due proportion with the rest of the inhabitants.
3. That the inhabitants of Shawshin shall hereafter acquit and discharge the town of Cambridge from all common charges, rates, duties, &c.
4. That whenever any of the inhabitants of Cambridge, shall alienate any of their interest in lands at Shawshin, the lands so alienated, shall be liable to taxation, in the same manner as if they had been

* Some letters of the reverend Thomas Muston of Wykin, his maternal uncle, to his friends in this country, have afforded me several interesting particulars.

granted by Shawshin. 5. No person, having land granted him, shall make any sale or gift, unless he shall make improvement by building and fencing. If any such improvements shall have been made and the person remove from his brethren, he shall not make sale, or gift, or any alienation thereof to any person, without the concurrence of the inhabitants of Shawshin.* Immediately after the acceptance of these proposals, the inhabitants of Shawshin requested the General Court "to confirm and record the same."† Their request was granted, and on the 29th of May, 1655, the town appears to have been incorporated.‡

In 1656, the inhabitants of Shawshin, in answer to their petition, obtained from the General Court a grant of land, lying upon Concord river, near the farms of John and Robert Blood.§ To this tract of land the court granted the name of *Billerica*. Whether the tract embraced by Shawshin grant, had previously received this name or not, is a subject of conjecture. It is certain however that this name is used in the records as early as 1654. In the same year that this grant was made, the Court granted the inhabitants of Billerica, 8000 acres of land, lying at Naticott, which was located, 24 April, 1657. About 6300 acres were situated on the east of Merrimac river and 1750 on the west side. The conditions of this grant were, "that the inhabitants of Cambridge should accept thereof, and disengage the lands desired at Billerica; and that the town of Billerica be settled with twenty families at least within three years, that the ordinances of God may be settled and encouraged in the said place of Billerica."||

The town was divided into lots by Jonathan Danforth, who was one of the committee for locating the house lots. These lots were most generally denominated ten, and five acre lots. A ten acre lot, or single share, contained 113 acres of upland and 12 acres of meadow. A five acre lot, or half of a single share, contained half the quantity of upland and six

* The names of the persons who accepted these propositions, and who were perhaps all the inhabitants of the place at that time, were, Ralph Hill, Ralph Hill, Jr. William French, John Stearns, William Patten, George Farley, John Croe, James Parker, John Parker, Robert Parker, Jonathan Danforth and William Chamberlain.

† The General Court confirmed their request May 23, 1655.

‡ Massachusetts Register.

§ See Appendix, Art. III.

|| Several subsequent grants were made to Billerica, which may be seen in the office of the Secretary of State. May 22, 1661, a grant of 4000 acres; May 27, 1663, 800 acres; Oct. 9, 1667, 500 acres. Mass. Records, pages 377, 421, 594.

acres of meadow. There were intermediate lots granted, having regard to the same proportion of upland and meadow.

The inhabitants had previously adopted such regulations, as they conceived were calculated to ensure their domestic tranquillity. One respecting the admission of future inhabitants appears to have been rigidly adhered to. It was agreed that "all persons unknown to them, desirous of becoming inhabitants, should bring a certificate from the place whence they came, exhibiting such testimony as should be satisfactory to the town—that upon their admission as inhabitants, they should subscribe their names to all orders of the town, and bear their proportion of all public charges in church, town and commonweal." Among the other regulations which were subsequently adopted, were the following: Any person, not qualified by law, who should presume to give his voice or vote in any elections of the town, or interfere in any town affairs, was subject to a fine of five shillings to be levied by the constable. Any inhabitant or proprietor, who should bring in, or entertain in town any person as a servant, should give bond to the constable to secure the town from all damage they might sustain by such servant. In case of refusal to give bond, a forfeiture of twenty shillings per week was incurred. No proprietor, possessing less than a ten acre privilege, should alienate any part of his right to any person without consent of the town. But a person having more than this proportion, might sell or dispose of a five acre privilege. Proprietors of not more than ten acre privileges could not, without permission of the town, dispose of their privilege to any person, not even to their children, without the town had refused to make them a grant.

In 1658, nineteen persons agreed with the reverend Samuel Whiting, in reference to his settlement with them in the gospel ministry. They stipulated to give him and his heirs, a ten acre privilege, and a house comfortably finished with the accommodations belonging to it, if he should continue with them during his life. They agreed to give him a salary of £.40 for the first two years, £.50 for the third, £.60 for the fourth, and afterwards engaged to "better his maintenance as the Lord should better their estates." His stated salary after the fourth year, was £.70. The inhabitants appear to have enjoyed the stated ministrations of the gospel, before they had erected a house of worship. Finding their numbers annually increasing, the town voted to build a meeting-house, 30 feet in length and 24 feet in width. This house, erected by John Parker, was completed about 1660. For several

years, it was covered with thatch instead of shingles. It had no galleries till about 1679, when it was enlarged and repaired.

In 1660, the first selectmen were chosen, who were to conduct the prudential affairs of the town. The number was five, the same as at the present time.

The town being infested with wolves, the inhabitants ordered that a bounty of 20 shillings should be paid to any person, either English or Indian, who should kill a wolf within the limits of the town and present the head thereof to the constable. In this manner these ferocious animals were probably extirpated. The Indians as well as English received the bounty.

The south burial place was located in 1663. It originally contained half an acre, and was the gift of Ralph Hill, senior.

From good evidence, it appears that the church in this town was gathered in 1663, and reverend Samuel Whiting was ordained on the 11th of November in the same year. The precise day when the church was organized, cannot be positively ascertained from any records which are known to exist. It is suspected however, and not without some degree of probability, that it might have been, 27 April, 1663.* At this time, there appears from the town records to have been a council of elders and messengers from other churches, though we are not informed for what express purpose they were convened. It is worthy of remark that this church has never been vacant but once, during a period of more than one hundred and fifty years. "From the earliest date of their connexion with a gospel minister to 1760, a friendly harmony has uniformly, or with very transient interruptions, subsisted between the church and people of God in this place, and those, who have successively ministered to them in holy things."[†]

In 1669, there were twelve baptisms in town, and eight persons admitted to full communion. In August, the same year, there was a contribution of six pounds for the relief of

* The evidence that the church was gathered in 1663, rests on a charge in the town records, vol. I, page 50. The charge respecting the Elders and Messengers from other churches, is made as follows: "27, 2, 1663, Charges, when ye councill of Elders and Messingers from other churches—[then follow a few characters, which are unintelligible] £1, 13, 6."

† Dr. Cumings.

the fleet, which had gone on an expedition to recover the island of St. Christopher from the French.*

A regard for purity of morals and an attention to religious duties, appear to have been characteristics of our ancestors. Within a few years after the town was settled, three persons were chosen "to examine the several families, and see whether their children and servants were taught in the principles of religion." In 1675, we find the selectmen of this town passing an order that all children and youth from eight years old and upwards, should be sent by their parents and masters to the reverend Mr. Whiting, to receive catechetical instruction at such times as should be appointed.

On the 2 August, 1675, Timothy Farley of this town, was killed at Quaboag, now Brookfield, in an engagement with the Indians.† Such was the gloomy aspect at this time, and the alarm and terror spread through the country by the ravages of the Indians, that the inhabitants of this town held a meeting on the 13 August, for the purpose of adopting measures for mutual defence and security. The following entry of their proceedings, is made in the records, which gives an idea of the danger, they apprehended from their subtle and powerful enemy. "The town, considering the Providence of God at the present, calling us to lay aside our ordinary occupations in providing for our creatures, and to take special care of our own lives, and the lives of our wives and children; the enemy being near and the warning of God's Providence upon our neighbors being very solemn, do therefore, order and agree to prepare a place of safety for women and children; and that persons and teams shall attend the said work until it be finished. An account of the whole charge being kept, shall be equally divided upon the inhabitants with other town charges." Soon after this meeting, the town received an order from the honorable council, to gather the several inhabitants into garrisons according to their best capacity. In obedience to this order, a meeting of the selectmen and committee of the militia, was holden for that purpose, 8 October, when several garrisons were formed, and suitable arrangements were made. On the 14th, the selectmen and committee were met by Major Simon Willard, who approved their measures, and assisted them in instituting a

*. These articles are derived from a MS. of Capt. Jonathan Danforth, received from Mrs. Hannah Rogers.

† See Whitney's history of the county of Worcester, article Brookfield.

number of other garrisons in addition to those formed on the 8th.*

The excitement produced in the public mind at this period, by the predatory incursions of the Indians, caused many persons to leave their habitations, and seek refuge in the most compact part of the several towns. The settlements in the northerly part of this town on Concord river, were, from their situation, peculiarly exposed, and were deserted by the inhabitants, who were ordered to be entertained "in the body of the town." It is not known that this town received any essential injury during King Philips' war.

The number of families in town about this time, appears to have been forty-eight, and the number of dwelling-houses forty-seven. In 1679, there were sixty rateable estates, including non-residents. In a return made in 1680, to a warrant from the deputy Governor, the town stated the number of families able to bear public charges to be fifty; and of aged persons and poor, including widows, to be ten. A writing and reading school was at this time taught by Joseph Tompson. No grammar school was in town.

In 1684, Jonathan Danforth was chosen deputy to a "special General Court." This is the first notice we find on

* The following were the garrisons appointed at these meetings, with the inhabitants belonging to each.

1. *Ralph Hills'*—Nathaniel and Jonathan Hill, Thomas Dutton, jun. William French, William and Isaac Chamberlain. (5 houses.)
2. *Thomas Foster's*—Joseph Foster, James Frost, Joseph French, Joseph Walker, Daniel Rogers, John Kittredge and Thomas Richardson. (6 houses.)
3. *Simon Crosby's*—Richard Daniel, William Ham'et, Jacob Hamlet, Jonathan Hides, Joseph Tompson and Peter Bracket. (7 families.)
4. *Rev. Samuel Whiting's*—Thomas Dutton, sen. John Dutton, Daniel Shed, John Shed, John Durant, John Rogers, John Rogers, jr. Thomas and Nathaniel Rogers. (6 families.) This was "the main garrison and the last refuge in case of extremity."
5. *Thomas Patten's*—Golden More, Samuel Frost, John Kidder, Roger Toothaker and John Trull, (5 families.)
6. *James Patterson's*—John Baldwin, Edward Farmer, Thomas Farmer, Henry Jefts and John Jefts, (4 families.)
7. *Jacob French's*—John French, John Marshall, Thomas Ross, and William Chamberlain, jr. (4 houses.)
8. *James Kidder's*—Daniel Shed, jr. Samuel Trull, John Bracket, and James Kidder, jr. (4 families.)
9. *Jonathan Danforth's*—Samuel Manning, John Dunkin, and Jonathan Danforth, Jr.
10. *Timothy Brooks'*—Michael Bacon.
11. *George Farley's* house "to entertain as it may be capable."
12. *Job Lane*, from his remote situation was allowed to fortify his own house, and "to have two soldiers if the country could spare them." The Masters of the several Garrisons were sergeant Ralph Hill, serg. Thomas Foster, serg. Joseph Tompson, Rev. Samuel Whiting, Thomas Patten, James Patterson, John Marshall, serg. James Kidder and Jonathan Danforth.

the records of a deputy being chosen from this town. The inhabitants, it is probable, had been represented by non-resident deputies, which was frequently practised under the old charter of the province. This practice was abolished in 1694, when an act passed the General Assembly, "restraining towns from choosing any person to represent them in the General Court, other than freeholders and residents within such towns." It appears that previous to 1669, this town had been represented by Mr. Davie of Boston.

In this year, 1684, an Indian title of the township appears to have been obtained at four Indian meetings, though I have not been so fortunate as to find the existence of any instrument purporting to be an Indian deed. The consideration made to the Indians for their title cannot be ascertained, but the charges arising from making the purchase were fifteen shillings.

Though the inhabitants of this town lived in the vicinity of a considerable number of Indians,* particularly their plantation at Wamesit, and were for a long time exposed to their attacks, there appears no evidence of their being molested by them till the year 1692. On the first day of August, this year, they killed Ann Shed, wife of Zachary Shed, with two of her children, Hannah, aged 13, and Agnes, aged 2 years; Joanna Dutton, aged 36, wife of Benjamin Dutton, and two of her children by a former husband, Mary Dunkin, aged 16, and Benoni Dunkin, aged 2½ years. Tradition has preserved few, or no particulars of the manner in which these families were assaulted.

The second meeting-house, 44 feet in length and 40 feet in width, was erected, 16 July, 1694.† The inhabitants had worshipped in the old one about thirty-four years.

On the 5 August, 1695, the Indians made a second irruption on the inhabitants of this place. In the northerly part of the town, on the east of Concord river, lived several families, who, though without garrisons and in time of war, felt no apprehensions of danger. Their remoteness from the frontiers might have contributed to their apparent security. The

* See Appendix, article VIII.

† October 23, 1693, the town agreed to build a new meeting-house, and December 8, appointed a committee for that purpose. The following account of raising it, is left on record in the hand-writing of Deacon Joseph Tompson.—"This service was attended by about 45 hands of our town the first day; and the town came generally the second day, and some of other towns. Some came to inspect us and several were helpful to us of other towns. The third day we concluded our work with our town's help. No considerable harm was done—not a bone broken. We had the help of our reverend pastor to desire God's blessing, and when we had finished our work, we concluded with a psalm of praise and returned thanks to God by our reverend pastor."

Indians came upon them suddenly, in the day-time. They entered the house of John Rogers while he was sleeping, and discharged an arrow at him, which entered his neck and pierced the jugular vein. Awakened with this sudden and unexpected attack, he started up, seized the arrow, which he forcibly withdrew, and expired with the instrument of death in his hand. A woman being in the chamber, threw herself out of the window, and though severely wounded, effected her escape by concealing herself among some flags. A young woman was scalped and left for dead, but survived the painful operation and lived for many years afterwards. A son and daughter of Mr. Rogers were taken prisoners. The family of John Levistone suffered most severely. His mother-in-law and five young children were killed, and his oldest daughter captured. Thomas Rogers and his oldest son were killed. Mary, the wife of Dr. Roger Toothaker, was killed, and Margaret, his youngest daughter, taken prisoner. Fifteen persons were killed or taken at this surprisal. After the most industrious examination of the records, I find the names of fourteen, which, with their several ages, will be added in a note.* Though the Indians were immediately pursued by the inhabitants of the centre of the town, yet so effectually had they taken precautions in their flight, that all efforts to find them were unavailing. It is said they had even tied up the mouths of their dogs with wampum, from an apprehension that their barking would discover the direction they had taken. The shock given to the inhabitants by this melancholy event, was long had in painful remembrance. Through the lapse of years, it is difficult to give a very circumstantial account of it, and the few particulars I have collected, ought, perhaps, to receive some deductions from the brevity of human memory.†

The first bridge over Concord river, on the Boston road, was erected at, or near the fordway, some time previous to

* John Rogers, aged about 53, Thomas Rogers, about 48, Thomas Rogers, jun. aged 11, Daniel Rogers,* 12, Mary Rogers,* 27, Mary Toothaker, Margaret Toothaker,* 13, Widow Ross, perhaps 63, Alexander, five weeks, Margaret, 2 years, Mary 5, Thomas 6, Seth 8, and Sarah,* 11, children of John Levistone. Those with a star were missing and supposed to be captured.

† Governor Hutchinson in his History of Massachusetts, vol. II, page 86, thus notices this transaction.—“In August, they killed and took fifteen at Billerica, and plundered the house of —— Rogers.” In the town records I find, “Aug. 5, 1695, this day received that awful stroke by the enemy, when fifteen persons were slain—more sad than that we met with three years before.” Dr. Cotton Mather published in 1698, “Decennium Luctuosum; an history of the remarkable occurrences of the long war with the Indians from 1688 to 1698.” As this event falls within this period, some account of it in this work may possibly be given.

1658. In 1663, it was removed from this place at the expence of this town and Chelmsford. For many yeats after, it was supported by Groton, Chelmsford and this town.* It does not appear to have been removed again till about 1699, when the former bridge having been "carried away by a flood, a new one was erected considerably higher up the river." In consequence of this removal, it became necessary to alter the road between Chelmsford and this town. This was mutually done by a committee,† appointed by each town, who attended that service, 25 September, 1699.

In 1701, the boundaries between this town, and Chelmsford and Concord were adjusted by a committee, appointed by the General Court at their session in May, 1700. The difficulties, which had for some time subsisted, were terminated by the ratification of the report of the committee.‡

On the 4 April, 1707, the north burying ground was located. It is five rods on the road, and twenty rods in length.

July 7, 1707, the town made choice of reverend Samuel Ruggles to assist reverend Samuel Whiting in the ministry, for the term of one year. Before the expiration of the year, he received an invitation to settle as a colleague with reverend Mr. Whiting. The town voted him £.100 settlement, and £.40 per annum during Mr. Whiting's life, and £.70 after his decease. He was ordained on the 19 May, 1708.

In 1708, a grant of land and other privileges, at the falls in Concord river, was made to Christopher Osgood, jun. of Andover, for the "erection of a grist-mill." The mill erected by him, was the first erected on Concord river, within the limits of the town. This grant embraces the place, where the valuable mills and factories are now situated, near the intersection of Concord river by the Middlesex Canal.

In 1712, died Capt. Jonathan Danforth, distinguished for his mathematical knowledge and extensive usefulness in this town. He was son of Nicholas Danforth,|| and brother to

* The country rate of these towns in 1663, which may give an idea of their relative importance at that time, was as follows.—Chelmsford £.18. 19. 1. Billerica, £.13. 10. 2. Groton, £.6. 15. 7. They were all incorporated, May 29, 1655.

† Jonathan Danforth, Edward Farmer and Samuel Manning, for Billerica, and Jerathmell Bowers; Nathaniel Hill and Stephen Pierce, for Chelmsford.

‡ See Appendix, Article XIV.

|| That he was son of *Nicholas* Danforth cannot admit of doubt, from the circumstance that the record of it is made by the former. The evidence that he was brother to the Hon. Thomas Danforth of Cambridge and reverend Samuel Danforth of Roxbury, appears in Sullivan's Hist. Maine, page 385, which has been already quoted, Allens' Biog. Dict. page 240, with documents in my possession. The Rev. John Elliot, D. D. in his Biog. Dict. observes that "the reverend Samuel Danforth came to New England, 1634, with his father *Nathaniel* Danforth." If they were really brothers, why this difference of names?

reverend Samuel Danforth of Roxbury. He was born at Framingham, in the county of Suffolk, in England, 29 February, 1627, and probably emigrated to this country when young. His family connexions were highly respectable. From an original letter of Governor Belcher in my possession to a son of Mr. Danforth, it appears that his family was related to the governor. When the settlement at Shawshin commenced, Mr. Danforth was among the first settlers. He was chosen one of the first selectmen, and continued in that office twenty-one years. The records were made by him for about twenty years. He was elected the first deputy to the General Court from this town on record. From his eminence in surveying, he was frequently employed in locating new towns and settlements in the provinces of New-Hampshire and Massachusetts. The plans of his surveys were very numerous. There still remains a large number of them. He left two MS. folios, containing sermons and sketches of sermons, for many years, together with the baptisms and admissions to the church. From an idea that they possessed no intrinsic value, the far greater part of these valuable writings have been sacrificed to ignoble purposes. While Mr. Danforth was justly celebrated for his eminence and distinction in mathematical knowledge, by a cotemporary, the most important part of his character is not concealed from view. His piety gave him the lustre, which was *most admired.**

On the 25 February, 1713, died reverend Samuel Whiting, having been a preacher in this place more than fifty years. Forty-nine years and three months had elapsed from his settlement. He was son of reverend Samuel Whiting, and was probably born before his father came to this country. He received his education at Harvard College, where he graduated in 1653. He came to this town, a few years after it was incorporated, as has been before observed. The

* A poem, on his death was written by J. D. v. D. M. who, from the style, is supposed to have been his nephew, Rev. John Danforth of Dorchester. The following extract, I received verbally from SAMUEL WHITING, Esq. and is all I have been able to obtain of it :

"He rode the circuit, chain'd great towns and farms,
To good behaviour; and by well marked stations,
He fix'd their bounds for many generations.
His art ne'er fail'd him, though the loadstone fail'd,
When oft by mines and streams it was assai'd;
All this is charming, but there's something higher,
Gave him the lustre which we most admire."

Then followed an account of his piety, attention to religious duties, which are celebrated by the poet in the versification peculiar to that period.

fidelity, circumspection and diligence, with which he discharged the various duties of a private, social and ministerial nature, prove that he was actuated by a spirit of christianity. The affection and benevolence of his people towards him, prove that they held his character in high estimation. In 1702 and 3, when sickness prevented him for several months, from attending to the duties of the sanctuary, their affection for him as upon other occasions, was manifested. They procured reverend John Fox to preach during his indisposition, and rewarded him at their own expence. In 1707, when the infirmities of age rendered him unable to discharge all the various duties of his sacred calling, reverend Samuel Ruggles was procured to assist him, and was ordained his colleague the following year. It is not known that he published any thing.* He had ten children, but the greater part died young. John Whiting, his second son, graduated at Harvard College in 1685, and was ordained the second minister in Lancaster about the year 1691.† In that town, he was slain by the Indians, 11 September, 1697, at the age of 33 years.‡

About the year 1718, there appears to have been a company of snow-shoe men formed in this town, and in several others in the vicinity. Their object was to repel the incursions of the Indians, and attack them in their quarters during the winter. Dr. Belknap, in his history of New-Hampshire, observes that this is called in the Council records an honorable service. The number belonging to this town was 19.||

* Mr. Whiting was one of the seventeen ministers, who bore testimony against the settlement of Mr. Davenport in the first church in Boston, and one of those who presented an address to the General Court, in vindication of their conduct from the unjust charge of innovation, &c. made against them by a committee appointed by the house of deputies at their session in May, 1670. Vide Hutchinson's Hist. Mass. vol. 1 page 248—250. In a poem on his death, written about a century since, he has the following character.

"WHITING, we here beheld a starry light,
Burning in Christ's right hand and shining bright;
Years seven times seven sent forth his precious rays,
Unto the gospel's profit and Jehovah's praise."

† The Rev. Mr. Whitney, in his history of the county of Worcester, says that he was probably settled in 1691.

‡ On the 11 September, 1697, the town of Lancaster was surprised by the Indians and twenty-one persons were killed, among whom, was the Rev. John Whiting, who being on some occasion at a distance from the garrison, the Indians surprised and killed him. They indeed offered him quarter, but he chose rather to fight to the last, than resign himself to those whose tender mercies are cruelty. Rev. T. Harrington's Century Sermon, 1753.

|| This is the number I find upon an old paper, purporting to contain "a list of the snow-shoe men in the towns of Billerica, Chelmsford and Dracut."

In 1729, the inhabitants of the southerly part of the town petitioned for the privilege of being detached from Billerica, that they might be incorporated as a separate town. At a general town meeting, the subject of their petition was taken into consideration, and a committee of eleven persons was chosen, who were empowered "to manage the affair and agree with the petitioners respecting the line." In September, the same year, this part of the town, with a part of Concord, was incorporated with the name of BEDFORD. Three years after this, the northerly part of the town petitioned to be set off as a township. A committee was chosen to view the land, who made a report at a subsequent meeting, when it was voted that the northerly and northeasterly part of the town be set off as a township, "granting two thirds of the land from Andover line to Billerica meeting-house, by a parallel line with said Andover, extending from Concord river to Wilmington line." On the 23 December, 1734, this tract of land was, by an act of the General Court, incorporated by the name of TEWKSURY.

In 1738, the third meeting-house, 60 feet in length and 46 in width, was built and consecrated to divine worship.*

In April, 1747, the town made choice of reverend John Chandler of Andover as an assistant with reverend Mr. Ruggles. They voted him £.600 old tenor, settlement, £.200 salary, of the same currency, during the life of Mr. Ruggles, and an addition of £.100 after his decease, with 20 cords of wood. On the 21 October following, a council of eight churches was convened for his ordination. On this occasion, reverend Daniel Rogers of Littleton, commenced with prayer, reverend James Chandler of Rowley, preached from John iii. 11;† reverend Samuel Phillips of Andover, gave the charge, and also added an exhortation to the people, in which, he pressed upon them the particular duties of a people towards their minister, and reverend Nicholas Bowes of Bedford, gave the right hand of fellowship.

The reverend Samuel Ruggles, second pastor of the church in this place, died, 1 March, 1749, at the age of 67,

* Sept. 15, 1737, "the town voted to build a new meeting-house for the public worship of GOD."

Nov. 28. "Voted to build said house, 60 feet in length and 46 in width."

March 7, 1738, "Voted to set said house about 37 feet north of the former one." *Town Records.*

† "Verily, verily I say unto thee, we speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen."

having been in the ministry forty years and nine months. He was son of Mr. Samuel Ruggles of Roxbury, and was born in that town on the 3 December 1681.* He graduated at Harvard College in 1702.

In 1755, a considerable number of inhabitants in the southwest part of the town, applied to be set off as a township or district. Their application at this time was unsuccessful. Twenty-four years after this, having renewed their request, all the inhabitants, within certain defined limits, were, by vote of the town, set off as a township. The tract of land thus detached was incorporated, in 1780, as a district, with the name of CARLISLE, and on the 18 February, 1805, was invested with town privileges.

In 1760, an ecclesiastical council, composed of five churches, was convened for the purpose of hearing the difficulties between the church and people in this place, and reverend John Chandler. Under the sanction of this council, the pastoral relation of Mr. Chandler to the church, was dissolved on the 5 of June. This was the only vacancy, which had occurred in the church, for almost a century from its organization. From this time till the vacancy was filled by a successor, the pulpit was supplied with the labors of Messrs. *Edward Brooks, Samuel Foxcroft, Job Whitney, Edward Perkins Sparhawk, Samuel Angier, Nathaniel Noyes, John Treadwell, William Whitwell and Benjamin Caryl.*† The reverend Mr. Whitwell was chosen by the church and town to settle in the ministry, but on account of some divisions, they deemed it not prudent to proceed any further in reference to his settlement.

Thursday, the 2 October, 1760, was set apart as a day of fasting and prayer, to supplicate the throne of grace for divine direction in the choice of a minister. Reverend Messrs. Rogers, Spalding, Morrill and Sherman, of Littleton, Tewksbury, Wilmington and Woburn, were requested to assist in the public exercises of the day. The town having heard the gentlemen already mentioned, on the 17 May, 1762, chose reverend Benjamin Caryl to settle with them in the work of the ministry.‡ For some reasons, which are not mentioned, he did not comply with their request. On the 18 November, 1762, the church and town met in con-

* MS. letter of Mr. Samuel Parker, Town Clerk of Roxbury, 1815.

† Those in Italics were afterwards settled in the gospel ministry.

‡ The vote was determined by yeas and nays. Yeas 86, Nays 22. The town voted him £.160 settlement, and £.73 6. 8. annual salary.

junction, and made choice of reverend Henry Cumings of Hollis, in New-Hampshire, to settle with them in the gospel ministry. They voted a settlement of £.200, and an annual salary of £.80, with other privileges. He was ordained, 26 January, 1763. At this time the council was composed of ministers and delegates from seven Churches. Reverend Isaac Morrill of Wilmington, opened the solemnity with prayer, reverend Daniel Emerson of Hollis, preached from Heb. xiii. 17; reverend Daniel Rogers of Littleton, gave the charge, reverend Ebenezer Bridge of Chelmsford, the right hand of fellowship, and reverend Joseph Emerson of Pepperell made the concluding prayer.

On the 10 November, 1762, died reverend John Chandler, who sustained the pastoral relation about twelve years. He was a native of Andover, and graduated at Harvard College in 1743. His sermons were written in a neat style and discover a benevolent spirit.

From this period to the commencement of the difficulties between this country and Great Britain, I do not find that any transaction, deserving particular notice, occurred. At an early stage of the opposition to the restrictions of the British parliament, this town appeared an advocate for freedom, and during the important struggle for liberty and independence, manifested a firm and unshaken spirit of resistance to all the encroachments of arbitrary power. As this was an interesting period in the affairs of the town, a few extracts from the records will be subjoined, in order to shew the spirit, which actuated the inhabitants on this memorable occasion.

On the 6 of June, a few days after the Boston Port Bill went into operation, this town held a meeting to consider the subject of a letter, which they had received from that devoted town. A committee was chosen, to deliberate and determine upon proper measures in this emergency of public affairs, who reported an answer, which reflects much credit on the patriotism of the town. "We consider," say they, "the blow struck at Boston, as aimed at the province in general, and as a prelude to something further, equally vindictive, yet in store for this and the other colonies. As we have a fixed reliance on the virtue of our brethren in Boston to persevere in the noble cause of liberty, which they have hitherto maintained with such laudable fortitude and resolution, and viewing ourselves as bound to animate and encourage them, we do hereby promise and declare our readiness to support and strengthen them in any measures, that shall be judged expedient for our common safety and de-

fence—for defeating every vengeful machination of those, who would punish us for shewing ourselves men, and dragoon us into slavery, because we disdain patiently to take the yoke upon our necks at their bidding." Towards the conclusion of the report, they say, "It would be an indelible disgrace, and a violation of the sacred obligations, we are under to GOD, to our country, to ourselves and to posterity, for us tamely and pusillanimously, to give up those invaluable liberties and privileges, which our worthy ancestors purchased at such a vast expense of blood and treasure." Such was the language of freemen, contending for their dearest rights and privileges.

On the morning of the 19 April, 1775, the inhabitants of this town became early apprized of the motion of the British. A considerable number collected, and proceeded to Concord to oppose their progress, and were present in that memorable engagement. This town lost no one during the arduous conflict, but two of their citizens were wounded.*

In 1779, a delegate was chosen from this town to the Convention, which convened at Cambridge, for the purpose of framing a Constitution, or form of government.

The town's quota of men, agreeably to a resolve of the General Court, passed, 30 June, 1781, for raising 2700 men, was thirteen.†

The valuation, in 1782, was £.4. 1. 0.‡

This town accepted the constitution of the United States by Col. William Tompson, their delegate to the Convention.|| The political character of the town has ever been decidedly federal.

For more than a century from 1692, it is believed, this town annually chose a representative to the General Court. The first chosen after the constitution of Massachusetts went into operation, was Major Edward Farmer, who continued in that office, with the exception of one year§ till 1795.

* John Nickles and Timothy Blanchard.

† Resolves of General Court for 1781, page 47.

‡ Resolves of 6 March, 1782.

|| Massachusetts Gazette of February 8, 1788.

§ 1787, when Col. William Tompson was chosen. EDWARD FARMER, Esq. died, 4 August, 1804, at the age of 70. In the line of his maternal ancestors, he descended from EDWARD JOHNSON of Woburn, the early historian of New-England. Possessing the esteem and confidence of his fellow-citizens, he was placed by them in many responsible offices, which, without the advantages of education, he discharged to general acceptance. His zeal for the cause of American freedom was a prominent trait in his character. It induced him to engage with ardor in the service of his country. After the capture of Burgoyne, at

The number of polls in 1809, entitled this town to two representatives, who were accordingly chosen.

In 1797, a building for an academy was erected in this town, under the care and direction of Ebenezer Pemberton, A. M. who received considerable assistance by the donation of individuals. The academy was opened by Mr. Pemberton for the reception of scholars the succeeding winter. Under his superintendence, with the assistance of Mr. Whiting, teacher of mathematics, this institution flourished for several years. It discontinued in the autumn of 1803.

In this year, the fourth meeting-house, 65 feet in length, and 51 in breadth, was erected.* It was dedicated to Christian worship, by appropriate religious exercises, on the 7 January, 1798. This respectable edifice is supposed to stand near the spot where the first meeting-house was erected. Its situation is pleasant and delightful, and commands an extensive and beautiful prospect. Here has the church flourished under the auspices of learned and pious pastors, and here have successive generations repaired to offer the incense of devotion, and pay their weekly adorations to the Parent of all Good.

In 1807, died Deacon Joshua Abbott, at the age of 84, having enjoyed the confidence of his fellow townsmen through a long series of years. His voluntary contributions for public uses, entitle his memory to a liberal share of respect. In his last will and testament, he devised a sum to purchase a town clock, which was received in 1803, and made a bequest of \$1400,† of which the interest is to be

which he was present, be returned to his native town, where he was chosen delegate to a Convention at Concord, and one of the Committee of Safety for 1779 and 1780. In the insurrection of 1786, he assisted in forming a company, and was one of the Justices, deputed to receive the oath of allegiance from the insurgents. The inhabitants of Billerica and the adjacent towns, paid particular respect to his memory, an account of which, may be seen in the Boston Repertory of August 10, 1804. The successors of Edward Farmer, Esq. are, 1795 and 6, Jonathan Bowers, Esq.; 1797, not represented; 1798, Jonathan Bowers, Esq.; 1799, Major Oliver Crosby; 1802, Jonathan Bowers, Esq.; 1803, James Abbot, Esq.; 1804, Major Oliver Crosby; 1805, Col. John Parker; 1806, Joseph Locke, Esq.; 1809, Joseph Locke, Esq. and Capt. Dudley Walker; 1810, Josiah Crosby, Esq. who is the present representative.

* It is ornamented with a handsome spire, and a clock, cost 500 dollars, made at Worcester, by Abel Stowell. It originally had 62 pews on the floor, and 26 in the gallery, which sold for 8504 dolls. 50 cts.

† This amount is not specified in his Will, as it was the last bequest, and depended upon the residue of the testators' estate, after the several legacies were discharged. Sept. 4, 1809, the town voted to receive 1400 dollars of James Abbot, Executor, in full of the last bequest in the last will and testament of Dea. Joshua Abbot.

annually applied to support a school, for disseminating a knowledge of church music and psalmody. These, with other acts of public and private munificence, will not permit the memory of the donor to sink into oblivion.

In the summer of 1811, the small pox made its appearance in the north part of the town. The cause from whence it originated, seems to be involved in mystery. It commenced in the family of *Asa Frost*, and had communicated to several others, before the disorder was known. The alarm produced in the neighborhood, when the disorder was ascertained to be the small pox, can better be conceived than described. The consternation became general, and extended through the town, and to others in the vicinity, till a period was put to it by a general vaccination, which was effected in a few weeks. Of fifteen, who had the small pox, five persons fell victims to its malignity.*

On 1 November, 1813, the town voted to invite reverend Nathaniel Whitman to settle as a colleague with reverend Doctor Cumings. At the same time they voted \$1000 for a settlement, and an annual salary of \$500, so long as the pastoral relation, between the venerable Doctor Cumings and his people, should not be dissolved by death. Distant be the period when his life and usefulness shall terminate. Reverend Mr. Whitman accepted of their invitation, and was ordained, 26 January, 1814, it being on that day, fifty-one years after the ordination of his venerable senior. On this interesting occasion, reverend Ezra Ripley of Concord, moderator of the council, addressed the numerous assembly, convened to witness the solemn and important scene. Introductory prayer was made by reverend President Kirkland of Cambridge; sermon, by reverend James Flint of Bridgewater, from Colossians i. 28; consecrating prayer, by reverend Ezra Ripley of Concord; charge, by the senior pastor;† right-hand of fellowship, by reverend Samuel Stearns of Bedford; concluding prayer, by reverend Nathaniel Thayer of Lancaster. The unanimity and harmony, which prevailed in the settlement of a *colleague*, and in the measures preparatory for that event, afford evidence for believing that the Christian and benevolent affections will be mutually cultivat-

* The Small Pox prevailed in a few families in 1690, and three or four persons died.

† A list of the publications of the venerable Doct. Cumings, will be found in the Appendix, Art. IX.

ed; and inspire a hope that the connexion will be happy, as it may be lasting.

"Long may his light on earth be spar'd to shine."

Such have been the leading events in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of Billerica, during a period of one hundred and sixty-three years. In tracing the progress of improvement, and in noticing the care and attention of the early settlers in transmitting their privileges to posterity, many emotions of pleasure have been realized. Though considerable perplexity and obscurity have occasionally arisen,* in the investigation of several important facts, the writer cherishes a hope that this humble effort of his researches will be found to contain nothing contrary to truth and impartiality.

Remarks on Health, Mortality, &c.—In general, this town may be said to have been healthy. Its elevated situation, doubtless contributes in some measure to the health of its inhabitants. In almost every situation, there are particular districts more favorable to health and longevity than others. The cause of this superiority is chiefly a free circulation of the air, uncontaminated with the noxious vapours and exhalations, which destroy its purity in other parts. This town does not, however, claim a superiority above those situated in its vicinity. The first inhabitants partook liberally of their healthy situation, if we may judge from the small number of deaths, which occurred among them. Those, who came from England, as well as their immediate posterity, attained to considerable ages.† Of those, who may be termed early settlers, twenty-one upon an average attained to the age of 83. The ages of several others, who must have been equally advanced, are not noted. The number of deaths for thirty-nine years after the first records commenced, was 94. The births during the same period, were more than five times that number.

* Much of this perplexity has arisen from the decayed and imperfect state of the early records, which, if not soon put in a better state of preservation, will be lost to posterity.

† Besides those already mentioned, the ages of the following persons are recorded. Died, Nov. 22, 1683, Margaret Hill, 88; May 6, 1684, Ann Wilkinson, who was born in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 94; Feb. 8, 1692, Mary Chamberlain, 88; Sept. 3, 1698, Golden Moore, 89; May 24, 1700, Henry Jeffs, 94; June 5, 1701, James Patterson, 68; June 15, 1704, John Trull, 70; May 31, 1706, William Chamberlain, 86; Dec. 28, 1717, Sarah Hawe, 85; 1726, Elizabeth Frost, 80; Oct. 9, 1743, Mary Tompson, 91.

It does not appear that any correct records of deaths were kept from 1704 to 1784, a period of eighty years. From the accounts of deaths, kept by the reverend Dr. Cumings for 28½ years, he infers that the instances of mortality in the course of 50 years, commencing with his settlement in 1763, amount to 1010; that the number of males is 478; that the annual average of deaths has been about 20; and that the ages of the several individuals collected into one sum, amount to 36,584 years.

The number of deaths, from July, 1784, to February, 1813, was 559, of which, 273 were males, and the aggregate of their ages amounted to 20,248.* The number from 1 January, 1813, to 1 January, 1816, was 90. Males, 50; females, 40.

Baptisms and admissions to the Church. The number of Baptisms during half a century, from 26 January, 1763, amounted to 1460, of which, 45 were adults, and 796 were males. The number of persons who joined in full communion with the church, was 307, besides 199, who were received into covenant with it, upon their making a public profession of their Christian faith.†

* See appendix, Art. XII.

† Rev. Dr. Cuming's Half Century Sermon.

APPENDIX.

ARTICLE I.

THE following copy of this grant is taken from the town records, with some variations of orthography.

"At a General Court held at Boston, on adjournment, 14 June, 1642. All the land upon Shawshin river, and between that and Concord river, and between that and Merrimac river, (not formerly granted by this court) are granted to Cambridge, so, as that they erect a village there within five years, and so as that it shall not extend to prejudice Charlestown village, or the village at Cochittuate, nor the farms formerly granted to the now Governor, of 1260 acres, and to Thomas Dudley, Esq. 1500 acres, and 3000 acres to Mrs. Winthrop; and Mr. Flint and Mr. Stephen Winthrop are to set out their head line toward Concord."

That there were several grants to individuals before this was made to Cambridge, is evident, as is implied above. Mr. Dudley's farm, which consisted of 1500 acres, was laid out in twelve ten acre lots. Mrs. Winthrop's farm of 3000 acres, was at Wamesit, now Tewksbury, and extended from the Indian plantation, on Merrimac river, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles below the mouth of Concord river. The Church Farm, containing 915 acres, lay upon Shawshin river, and extended from the bridge down the river, 349 rods. Harvard College Farm, lay upon Shawshin river, and contained 220 acres. Besides these, were Elder Richard Champney's Farm, and Major Daniel Gookin's Farm, which were situated within the ancient limits of Billerica.

ART. II.

The second grant is expressed as follows:—"At a General Court held at Boston, 10, 3m. 1643. Shawshin is granted to Cambridge without any condition of making a village

there. And the land between them and Concord is granted to them, all, save what was formerly granted to the Artillery Company, or others, provided the church and present elders continue at Cambridge."

ART. III.

GRANTS OF THE GENERAL COURT,

to Billerica, in 1656.

At a General Court, begun 14 May, 1656. "In answer to the petition of several proprietors and inhabitants of Shawshin, humbly desiring a tract of land lying near the farms of John and Robert Blood, and so along by the side of Concord river, &c. the Court grants their request in that respect, so as it hinders not former grants; and grant the name of the plantation to be called Billerica."

"In answer to the petition of the inhabitants of Billerica, this court doth grant to the town of Billerica, eight thousand acres of lands, for the ends desired, in any place or places that are free and not capable of making a town, provided that the said lands be laid out before the next Court of election, and the inhabitants of Cambridge do accept thereof, and disengage the lands desired at Billerica; and also, that the town of Billerica be settled with twenty families, at least, within three years, that the ordinance of God may be settled and encouraged, in the said place of Billerica. And it is ordered, that Major Willard, Captain Edward Johnson, Mr. Edward Jackson, or any two of them, with Thomas Danforth, or any other Surveyor, shall lay the same out at the petitioners' charge, making return at the next Court of election."

ART. IV.

SCHOOLS, LIBRARIES, AND POPULATION.

SCHOOLS.

The first notice in the records of a school in town, is in 1679, when Joseph Tompson was chosen schoolmaster by the selectmen. He continued an instructor of youth many years, and was employed as late as 1711. In

1718, and about that time, schoolmasters were chosen or appointed by the selectmen, and had an annual stipend of £.35. A committee was annually chosen to direct the affairs of the school, and order where they should be taught. The town is divided into ten wards, or districts, of which, two some under the appellation of grammar schools. These districts are designated as follows: first centre, second centre, third centre, first east, second east, north, south-west, Shawsheen, north and south-west. The two last are west of Concord river.

LIBRARIES.

There are two libraries in town, besides Dobson's edition of the Encyclopædia, which, with the supplement, is a valuable source of information and instruction. The first Social Library in Billerica was instituted in 1772. It was among the first instituted in the Commonwealth.

The second Library was incorporated in November, 1807, by the name of the "Second Social Library." "Both together contain a large and valuable collection of books."*

POPULATION.

The number of inhabitants of Billerica in 1790, was 1200, in 1800, 1383, in 1810, 1289. The number of free white males, according to the census of 1810, was 623, and of females 664. Of the former, 183 were under ten years of age, 108 of ten and under sixteen, 117 of sixteen and under twenty-six, 97 of twenty-six and under forty-five, and 118 of forty-five and upwards. Of the latter, 176 were under ten, 103 of ten and under sixteen, 116 of sixteen and under twenty-six, 139 of twenty-six and under forty-five, and 130 of forty-five and upwards. The number of polls in 1810, was 316. The number in 1815, was 251. In 1800, Billerica ranked as the ninth town in population in the county of Middlesex.

* MS. letter of Dr. Rufus Kittredge, April 5, 1816.

ART. V.

PASTORS OF THE CHURCH IN BILLERICA,

With the times of their ordination, removal, and death.

I. SAMUEL WHITING, A. M. ordained, 11 November, 1663; died, 29 February, 1713, $\text{Æt. } 80.$ *

II. SAMUEL RUGGLES, A. M. ordained, 19 May, 1708; died, 1 March, 1749, $\text{Æt. } 67.$

III. JOHN CHANDLER, A. M. ordained, 21 October, 1747; dismissed, 5 June, 1760; died, 10 Nov. 1762.

IV. HENRY CUMINGS, D. D. graduated at Harvard College, 1760; ordained, 26 January, 1763.

V. NATHANIEL WHITMAN, A. M. graduated at Harvard College, 1809; ordained, 26 January, 1814.

DEACONS OF THE CHURCH.

	<i>Died.</i>	<i>Age.</i>
Joseph Tompson,	13 October, 1732.	93.
James Frost,	12 August, 1711.	74.*
Joseph Foster	December, 1721.	75.*
William French,	30 September, 1723	55.
John Sheldon,	27 August, 1724.	64.
William Patten,	5 October, 1730.	60.
Joseph Davis,	30 September, 1747.	80.*
Joshua Abbot,	11 February, 1769.	84.
Samuel Whiting,	4 November, 1772.	70.
William Stickney,	27 August, 1781.	76.
Ralph Hill,	13 February, 1789.	82.
Joshua Davis,	18 February, 1777.	63.
Joshua Abbot,	8 August, 1807.	84
William Tompson,	2 September, 1806.	83.
Timothy Danforth,	21 June, 1792.	63.
Oliver Crosby.		
Ebenezer Pemberton,	resigned.	
Samuel Whiting.		
Joseph Locke.		
Jeremiah Patten,	21 January,	1815.43.

* The ages of those with this mark, are stated from the best evidence which could be obtained.

ART. VI.

A LIST OF THE NATIVES OF BILLERICA,

Who have received a public education.

I. Graduated in 1685. **John Whiting, A. M.* son of reverend Samuel Whiting, was born, 1 August, 1664. He was ordained at Lancaster, about 1691; was killed by the Indians, 11 September, 1697, $\text{Æt. } 33$.

II. 1690. **Joseph Whiting A. M.* who graduated this year, is supposed to have been brother of the preceding. If this supposition is correct, he was born, 7 February, 1669, and died, 6 September, 1701, $\text{Æt. } 32$.

III. 1751. **Josiah Stearns, A. M.* son of John Stearns, was born, 20 January, 1732. He was ordained in 1758, at Epping, N. H. where he died in 1790, $\text{Æt. } 62$.

IV. 1751. **Jonathan Kidder, A. M.* son of Thomas Kidder, Esq. was born, 26 March, 1728. He was a school-master many years in his native town, where he died, 18 March, 1805, $\text{Æt. } 77$.

V. 1764. *Joseph Kidder, A. M.* son of Capt. Enoch Kidder, was born, 18 November, 1741. He was ordained at Dunstable, N. H. in 1767.

VI. 1769. *William Bowers, A. M.* son of Capt. William Bowers, was born, 20 April, 1744. He is a practitioner of medicine in his native town.

VII. 1779. *Andrew Bowers, A. M.* son of Capt. Josiah Bowers. He was Representative several years to the General Court of N. H. from Salisbury, where he resides.

VIII. 1794. **David Abbot, A. M.* son of Mr. David Abbot, was born, 18 December, 1770, and died, 9 April, 1804, $\text{Æt. } 33$.

IX. 1794. *James Bowers, A. B.* son of Capt. Josiah Bowers. He was ordained over the Episcopalian Society at Marblehead.

X. 1794. *William Crosby, A. B.* son of Mr. Hezekiah Crosby. He was a Councillor at Law several years, and is now a Senator of the Commonwealth and Chief Justice of the Court of Common Pleas, Third Eastern Circuit.

XI. 1795. *Oliver Crosby, A. M.* son of Major Oliver Crosby, is an Attorney at Law, Justice of the Peace and resides at Dover, N. H.

XII. 1795. Henry Cumings, A. M. son of reverend Henry Cumings, D. D. is an instructor of youth in the State of New-Hampshire.

XIII. 1802. Joseph Richardson, A. M. son of Mr. Joseph Richardson, graduated at Dartmouth College, and is settled at Hingham. He is author of the American Reader and several valuable publications.

XIV. 1809. Artemas Rogers, A. B. son of Mr. Josiah Rogers, is an attorney at law at Henniker, N. H.

XV. 1813. Frederic Augustus Parker, A. B. son of John Parker, Esq. is a student of medicine.

All the preceding received their education at Harvard College, excepting Rev. Joseph Richardson.

Under Graduates at Harvard College.

SENIOR—Augustus Whiting, son of Samuel Whiting, Esq.

JUNIOR—Micajah Rogers, son of Mr. Josiah Rogers.

At Brown University, R. I.

FRESHMAN—Benjamin Bowers, Jun.

ART VII.

TOWN CLERKS

Of Billerica, from A. D. 1657, to 1816.

	Years in office.	Years in office.
John Parker,		William Stickney,
William Tay,	1.	Joshua Abbot,
Jonathan Danforth,	20.	William Bowers,
Samuel Manning,	8.	Oliver Crosby,
Joseph Tompson,	9.	James Abbot,
John Stearns,	2.	Jacob Richardson,
Oliver Whiting,	17.	Blaney Abbot,
John Needham,	2.	Jeremiah Patten,
Benjamin Tompson,	4.	Jeremiah Farmer,
Joshua Abbot,	31.	Samuel Whiting.*

* Chosen in March, 1816.

ART. VIII.

INDIANS. Within the original limits of Billerica lived a considerable number of Indians. The Pawtucketts at Wamesit and its vicinity, contained in 1675, about 250 souls. They had formerly been estimated at 3000. The right of the Indians to the township of Billerica, seems to have been partially acknowledged by the English, as we find the inhabitants obtained a purchase from them in 1684. The Indians, however, appear to have retained a part of Wamesit, which bordered on Mrs. Winthrop's farm of 3000 acres. At this place they had a praying town, which, in 1674, according to Gookin's Collections, contained 15 families, and 75 souls. They inhabited a small tract of land on the east side of Concord river, and bordering on Merrimac river. The divisional line between them and the English, I am informed, extended from Merrimac river, about half a mile below the mouth of Concord river, on a direct line to Concord river, two miles from its mouth. Their plantation was separated from the English by a ditch, which may be seen at this day. Within these limits, is a hill, called *Fort Hill*, lying nearly parallel with Concord river, on which are the remains of their fortification. It seems that the Indians at this place, were in some degree civilized. They here attended to the cultivation of their land; planted apple-trees in the manner of the English, some of which remain, but have become incorporated with the trees of the forest. The names of several Indians are preserved in the records of Billerica. Capt. Danforth had one in his family of the name of *Warrick*, in the capacity of a servant, who died, about 1686.

ART. IX.

List of the Publications of reverend Dr. Cumings.

SERMONS.

1. On the day of Public Thanksgiving, 27 November, 1766.
2. On the day of Thanksgiving, 23 November, 1775.
3. A sermon preached at Lexington, on the 19 April, 1781.
4. On the General Election, at Boston, 28 May, 1783.
5. On the day of National Thanksgiving, 11 December, 1783.
6. At the ordination of reverend Phinehas Wright, at Bolton, 26 October, 1785.
7. On Natural Religion, 28 June, 1795.

8. On Thanksgiving Day, 15 December, 1796.
9. On Thanksgiving Day, 27 November, 1798.
10. At the ordination of reverend Caleb Bradley, at Falmouth, 9 October, 1799.
11. Eulogy on Gen. George Washington, 10 January, 1800.
12. On the Public Fast, 9 April, 1801.
13. Charity Sermon, at Roxbury, 21 September, 1802.
14. An Half-Century Sermon, 21 February, 1813.

15. Right Hand of Fellowship, annexed to the sermon preached at the ordination of reverend Elijah Dunbar, at Peterborough, N. H. 23 October, 1799.
16. Charge, annexed to the sermon, preached at the ordination of reverend Wilkes Allen, at Chelmsford, 16 Nov. 1803.
17. Charge, annexed to the sermon at the ordination of his colleague, reverend N. Whitman, 26 January, 1814.

ART. X.

The following information, respecting some others of the early settlers is given, as it may be gratifying to their descendants.

John Stearns was one of the earliest inhabitants. He married Mary Lathrop, of Plymouth colony. He died, 5 March, 1669. John Stearns, his son, was the first person born in town, on record. His birth occurred the second week in May, 1654. In this town, he passed his days and died, 26 October, 1728, at the age of 74. His long continuance in several offices, of a civil and military kind, affords a proof of the confidence reposed in him by his fellow-citizens. From him descended reverend Josiah Stearns of Epping, N. H. Isaac Stearns, Esq. and reverend Mr. Stearns of Bedford.

John Baldwin, the ancestor of those of that name in Billerica, obtained a grant of land from the town in 1657. His sons, three in number, settled in town. He died, 25 September, 1687.

James Kidder, an inhabitant as early as 1656, was one of the selectmen six years. He died prior to 1678. He had nine sons, of whom three, James, Enoch and Ephraim, settled in town. His posterity are very numerous.

Roger Toothaker was admitted an inhabitant, 9 November, 1660. Tradition says he was a physician, and came from England, though it is probable he was not regularly bred. A medicinal herb, called Alexander, [Hipposelini] which

which he is said to have brought with him from England, and planted on his farm in this town, continued to flourish till within a few years. His son, grand-son, and great-grandson, all of the same name, have the appellation of physicians.

Thomas Patten, was son of William Patten of Cambridge, who appears to have been one of the original settlers. The former died, 16 January, 1689, aged 54, leaving four sons.

Job Lane was from England. He lived in that part of the town which is now Bedford. Major John Lane, probably his son, represented this town in the General Court, one or two years, and died, 17 January, 1715.

John Levistone, whose family suffered so severely from the Indians, was from Scotland, and settled in town about 1681.

Thomas Pollard emigrated from Warwickshire, in England. He was son of William Pollard, who was a glover, of the city of Coventry, in Great Britain.* He became an inhabitant about 1692, and died, 4 April, 1724, leaving ten sons.

Of the name of *Parker*, there appears to have been several, who received grants of land, viz. *John, James, Joseph, and Robert*. *John* we have already noticed. *Robert* belonged to Cambridge. Benjamin Parker, his son, resided in Billerica.

Of the name of *French* there were four—*William* and *John*, mentioned page 4; *Joseph*, who was accepted an inhabitant, 8 December, 1662. He was son of John French of Cambridge, and was born about 1638. *Jacob*, who was one of the selectmen, and died 20 May, 1713.

John Bracket was son of Capt. Richard Bracket, and died, 18 March, 1686.

Thomas Carrier, alias *Morgan*, an emigrant from Wales, was not at first accepted as an inhabitant, and a petition was presented to the county court against his admission. The witchcraft delusion in 1692, involved his family in the greatest distress. Richard Carrier, his son, (born in this town, 16 July, 1674,) was one of the witnesses against Mr. George Burroughs. His wife was arrested on suspicion of witchcraft, had a trial before the court at Salem, was condemned, 5 August, and executed on the 11th, among the unhappy victims at Salem village. The confession of his daughter, Sarah Carrier, a child about seven years old, before Major Willard, is given by Hutchinson, vol 2, page 44, first edition. It appears that he had left town, before his family was involved in this sad catastrophe, and had settled in Andover, or in its vicinity.

* MS. letter of Thomas Browne of Astley Hall, Warwickshire.

ART. XI.

CATALOGUE OF THE NAMES

In Billerica, from the date of incorporation, 1655, to the year 1700; to which is annexed the number of births on record of each name, from the former period, to 1 January, 1816.

*Alden,	1	Frost,	90	*Patterson,	13
Bacon,	33	*Gorton,	4	*Perry,	1
Baldwin,	120	*Grimes,	4	Pollard,	78
Blanchard,	61	*Hale,	-	*Poulter,	8
*Bracket,	19	*Hamlet,	5	Richardson,	149
*Brooks,	6	*Hides,	2	Rogers,	94
Browne,	80	Hill,	135	*Rofs,	18
*Butler,	2	Holden,	6	Sanders,	74
*Carrier,	5	Hopkins,	16	*Sharp,	3
*Chamberlain,	50	*Hubbard,	-	Shed,	118
*Champney,	5	*Hunt,	49	*Sheldon,	14
*Corneal,	10	Jefts,	37	Stearns,	104
Crosby,	194	*Kemp,	24	*Tay,	6
Danforth,	143	Kidder,	100	*Tompson,	20
Davis,	42	*Kinsley,	-	*Teothaker,	28
*Ditson,	31	Kittredge,	72	Trull,	39
*Dunkin,	7	*Lane,	28	Walker,	70
Durant,	47	Levistone,	54	*Web,	2
*Dutton,	42	Manning,	75	Whiting,	69
*Farley,	57	Marshal,	54	*Wilkinson,	-
Farmer,	86	*Meades,	1	*Wilson,	46
*Farr,	1	*Moore,	-	*Whitaker,	1
*Fassett,	6	Needham,	44	*Willowes,	4
*Fitch,	5	*Page,	13		
Foster,	43	Parker,	57	Total,	3186
French,	182	Patten,	76		

The above may be considered the ancient names of Billerica, of which, nearly one half are to be found there at this period. Some families, of names mentioned in the preceding Table, were detached from this town when Bedford and Tewksbury were incorporated. Some of these names are extinct in Billerica, but are still found in those places. Of those, who became inhabitants after the commencement of the last century, the most prevailing names are, Abbot, Beard, Bowers, Dows, *Hall, Jaquith, Kendall, *Lew-

* Those names, having this mark above and in the table, are extinct in town. A few other names, than those in the table, are found in the records prior to 1700. These are Bird, Bly, Cary, Daniel, Deane, Ellis, Fisher, Fox, Goffe, Gould, Gurney, Hassell, Jaquish, Lewis, Muzzey, Osborn, Plumb, Scott, Sol-lindine, Tuder, Willice. But no birth of either of these names occurs prior to 1700. The most of them were only temporary residents.

is, *Osgood, Ruggles, Sprake, Stickney, Spalding and *Tarbell. The numbers of births on record, of these several names, and all others not comprehended in the above table, amount to 949, which, added to the number in the table, make the whole aggregate of births on record to be *four thousand, one hundred and thirty-five.* It is not to be inferred that this is the whole number of births in town since its first settlement, as it is very evident that a large number is not recorded. Though it is of obvious importance, that they should be recorded, and notwithstanding a law, annexing a penalty for neglect, is in force, yet many of our citizens are totally regardless of the former, and with impunity incur the penalty of the latter.

ART. XII.

TABLE

OF BIRTHS, MARRIAGES, AND DEATHS, IN BILLERICA,

For fifty-one years, commencing A. D. 1654.

	Bths.	Mar.	Deaths.		Bths.	Mar.	Dths.		Bths.	Mar.	D.	
1654	3	1	0		1672	13	3	5	1690	14	3	6
55	2	1	0		73	11	2	3	91	16	-	3
56	.2	1	1		74	14	5	8	92	13	-	14
57	2	0	0		75	16	1	10	93	19	-	6
58	4	1	0		76	15	1	7	94	19	-	10
59	5	1	2		77	17	6	6	95	14	6	13
1660	8	1	1		78	14	4	5	96	24	-	3
61	3	3	0		79	17	0	3	97	18	-	4
62	9	8	4		1680	25	2	7	98	24	-	8
63	8	1	2		81	14	7	4	99	22	-	3
64	16	3	1		82	12	2	5	1700	16	-	2
65	13	3	1		83	24	1	8	1	21	-	4
66	11	4	1		84	14	2	6	2	24	5	5
67	13	3	5		85	14	2	5	3	30	6	8
68	15	2	6		86	21	5	4	4	20	6	6
69	13	6	3		87	18	-	6				
1670	19	3	9		88	17	-	4	758	119	238	
71	23	1	7		89	19	5	4				

The preceding table of Births, Marriages and Deaths, excepting from the year 1693 to 1702, inclusive, is copied from a record made by Capt. Jonathan Danforth in the most ancient book of Births, &c. in Billerica. The number of marriages against those years having a dash, is not noted in said record.

ART. XIII.

A TABLE, exhibiting a view of the ages of those, who died from July, 1784, to February, 1813.

BY REV. DR. CUMINGS.

91 were under one year;	65 between 1 and 5
23 between 5 and 10	21 50 55
11 10 15	23 55 60
21 15 20	15 60 65
26 20 25	36 65 70
22 25 30	31 70 75
15 30 35	32 75 80
17 35 40	42 80 85
23 40 45	18 85 90
19 45 50	8 90 95

ART. XIV.

The following document contains the report of the committee and the order of Court thereon.

“Anno Regni Regis Gulielmi decimo tertio. At a great and General Court, or Assembly for his Majestys’ Province of the Massachusetts Bay, begun and held at Boston upon Wednesday, 28 May, 1701.

WHEREAS Major Jonathan Tyng, Major James Convers and Capt. Benjamin Garfield, a committee, appointed by the General Court, at their session in May, 1700, to view and settle the lines between the town of Billerica and the farms of John and Robert Blood, and the towns of Concord and Chelmsford, have reported their doings therein as followeth—That is to say, that as well as by their own view of the lines, court grants, and deeds produced to them, as on hearing of what was offered by the agents of the several towns, they find the land of Billerica bounded by the line of Chelmsford northward, beginning at Pawtucket stake, so called, by Concord River, where Chelmsford and Billerica and the Indians do meet; then Chelmsford line runneth south, forty-three degrees west, to a pillar of stones; then it runneth south, seventy-nine degrees west, three hundred and thirty-two pole, which reacheth unto Major Willard’s farm, to a great heap of stones in Chelmsford line; then the Major’s farm runneth southwardly, forty-six degrees west, one hundred and sixteen pole to a little white-oak; then it runneth south, forty-one degrees west, three hundred eighty and four pole, which reached to a marked pine in Concord village line, near to a place called Berry corner; then it is bounded southward by a line which was run by the above said committee, betwixt the Bloods and Billerica, which ran from a pine called *Allias* corner, south, eighty and five degrees west, one hundred seventy and four pole, which reached unto Concord line. Again, it is bounded north-east and south-east, east and south-east by Concord river.

“Resolved, That the said Report be accepted and approved, and the boundaries and lines of the towns and lands above named settled accordingly. ISAAC ADDINGTON, Secretary.”





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